

Vehicle Break-ins

The following tips help prevent vehicle break-ins, which could lead to theft of the vehicle or of things in it.

- Park in an open, well-lighted, and populated area near your destination, preferably one in view of a security camera. Avoid parking near trucks, vans, camper shells, dumpsters, and other objects that obstruct visibility and provide hiding places.
- Never leave anything in plain sight, not even empty bags or boxes. Conceal all navigation aids, cellular phones, audio systems, sunglasses, etc. inside your vehicle.
- Put anything of value in your trunk. Thieves usually don't break into vehicles unless they plan to steal what's visible inside.
- Park in lots or garages where you don't have to leave your keys.
- Park in your garage at home if you have one. Don't leave your vehicle on the street unless necessary. Avoid dark and isolated areas.
- Turn off your engine, roll up all windows, lock all doors, and take your keys with you even if you are making a quick stop at a store or gas station.

- Don't leave your vehicle in an unattended public lot for an extended period time.
- Install an alarm system that will sound when someone attempts to break in, move, tilt, or start your vehicle. Always activate system.
- Check your vehicle if you hear the alarm sound. But don't try to stop a person attempting to break in. Get a good description of the person and call the police.
- When you lock your vehicle with a fob make sure that all the doors are locked before leaving your vehicle.

Carjacking

These tips will help your prevent a robber from taking your vehicle when you are driving or in it.

If you do get involved with a robber, don't resist or argue. Your life is much more valuable than your vehicle.

- Lock the doors immediately after getting in your vehicle.
- Know where you are going. Stop and get directions before you get lost.
- Avoid driving alone, especially at night and in dangerous areas.
- Never pick up hitchhikers.
- Keep a cell phone handy for use if you are threatened.

- Drive to an open business and call **911** if a vehicle is following you. If there aren't any open businesses, call **911** from your vehicle to report your location.
- Keep your vehicle in gear when stopped for traffic signals or signs. Be alert for anyone approaching your vehicle.
- Keep purses and other valuables out of view when driving alone.
- Honk your horn or flash your emergency lights to attract attention if you are threatened.
- Don't stop and help emergencies, call **911**.
- Keep your vehicle in good condition so it won't break down. Don't run out of gas or electricity.
- If your vehicle breaks down or runs out of gas or electricity, pull over to the right as far as possible. Call and wait for help. Remain in your locked car until you can identify any person who comes to help.
- Be wary of minor rear-end collisions, especially at night on dark freeway off-ramps. Remain in your vehicle with the doors and windows locked if you are uneasy or suspicious. Drive to the nearest open business to check the damage and exchange insurance information.

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The City of
SAN DIEGO



SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Vehicle Theft, Break-ins, and Carjacking

**This brochure contains
information regarding Vehicle
Theft, Break-ins, and
Carjacking Topics Include:**

- **Vehicle Theft**
- **Vehicle Break-ins**
- **Carjacking**

Vehicle Theft



Who Steals Cars?

Professional Thieves

- Professionals commit the majority of auto thefts.
- They prefer high-performance cars, as well as less exotic, more popular models whose parts are interchangeable.
- These thieves usually turn the cars they steal over to “chop shops,” which dismantle them and sell the parts.
- They also steal cars for export to other countries, often “stealing to order” to fulfill requests for certain types of vehicles.

Joy-Riders

Joy-riders favor high-performance or luxury cars. These cars are usually recovered but often suffer significant damage.

"Bump-and-Rob"

Carjackers may bump your car from the rear, then steal it when you get out to look for damage. When stopped at a traffic light, leave room to maneuver around the vehicle ahead if you need to.

If another car bumps yours and you feel threatened, drive to a populated area or, if you have a cellular phone, call the police for assistance.

Preventing Vehicle Theft



The following are tips to prevent vehicle thefts.

- Keep your vehicle locked at all times, even while driving.
- When parked, never leave your keys in the car. Close all the windows and the sunroof.
- Never leave your car running and unattended.

- Avoid leaving valuables inside your vehicle where passersby can see them.
- Do not leave your vehicle title in the car. Too often a car thief is pulled over and gets away from the police because he or she can produce the auto registration. (If multiple drivers use the vehicle, the best suggestion would be to hide the registration in a secret location in the car that only the owners know.)
- Know where you're going. Avoid known high crime areas even if the alternate route takes longer.
- Install an anti-theft system in your vehicle if it doesn't have one. Thieves are reluctant to steal vehicles if they know the cars can be recovered quickly. Many insurers offer discounts for the types of systems listed below.
- Thieves prefer to work in the dark. Be particularly cautious at night about where you park your car. Park it in a well-lit area if possible.
- Look around. Be aware of your surroundings, especially in garages, parking lots and gas stations.
- Have your car's vehicle identification number (VIN) etched on each of the windows. Car thieves want to get off cheap. They don't want to go to the expense of replacing all the glass.

- On an incline, leave your car in park or in gear with the wheels turned toward the curb or some other obstruction. This makes it harder for thieves to tow your vehicle.
- Conceal maps or travel brochures that may indicate you are a tourist.
- If confronted by a carjacker, do not resist. Cars can be replaced; you can't.
- Use anti-theft devices that can be attached to the steering wheel or column, or brake pedal.



- A mechanism that locks onto the steering wheel can be a very visible sign that you've taken steps to protect your vehicle.
- Ignition cut-off systems that prevent a car from being started
- Some new cars come with passive alarms that activate automatically when the key is removed from the ignition
- One system emits a signal that can be tracked by the police